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PROGRAM SHERRY HENRY STATION WOR

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FULL TEXT

SHERRY HENRY: Good morning, everybody. This is Sherrye Henry, and welcome to the next hour. We're going to be talking about this very strong drive that the President is making to get that \$100 million for the Nicaraguan rebels. Just look at the "Times" headlines this morning, big story. He's stepping up all his efforts. He says that American troops must never be needed in the region. He said we must send money, we must send materials so we'll never have to send our own boys.

But, the same newspaper reports that the House of Representatives seems to be balking. Yesterday there were two panels; both turned down the President's proposal. Now, those are not binding votes. The full House won't act until next week, but you can imagine, can't you, that lobbying now is intense. There is an awful lot of proposals, counter-proposals being made on both sides.

The President is facing a lot of opposition, and you're going to get an idea of how strong both sides are about what they say, when you hear the two people on the air today. And you going to probably get an idea, as I will, about how tough it is to be a legislator these days, when you're hearing two sides that are so diametrically opposed to each other.

Here's David McMichael in the studio. He's a senior research fellow at the Council on Hemispheric Affairs down in Washington.

Now, from 1981 to 1983, David McMichael was a C.I.A. analyst, and he focused on political and military developments down in Central America. While he was employed by the C.I.A., Mr. McMichael had access to, as I understand it, the most

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sensitive intelligence about the area. He's been traveling extensively in Central America. He just returned on Sunday from a long stay in Nicaragua.

On the telephone, talking to us from the White House this morning, Colonel Lawrence Tracy. Colonel Tracy is the senior defense representative in the Office of Latin American Public Policy at the State Department. During the same time that David McMichael was over at the C.I.A., Colonel Tracy was desk officer in the Pentagon's Office of International Security Affairs for the Inter-American Region.

He had access to the same intelligence data, if I'm correct, and also had responsibility for the Defense Department's policy matters regarding Nicaragua and El Salvador.

Here are these two men, operating at the same time, reading the same information, who are going to give you two very different points of view.

Colonel Tracy, are you there, sir?

COLONEL LAWRENCE TRACY: I am here, thank you.

HENRY: And thank you for being there. And David McMichael here in the studio. Let me start off with you, Mr. McMichael.

Since you just got back from Nicaragua, why don't you tell us what the situation is there as you saw it, and how crucial is it at the moment for the rebels. What is their situation?

DAVID MCMICHAEL: Well, Sherrye, that was my principal reason for being down there. I traveled extensively. I was, for the better part of three weeks, up in the main contested zones in northern Jinotega and out in central Zolia, where the remnants of this now badly-defeated contra force are.

And what you have been reading in the newspapers is true. This force is defeated; it is demoralized. The remnants of it within Nicaragua are being defeated in place. The bulk of these forces have returned to their camps in Honduras, where the Honduran government, by the way, denies officially that they are.

It seems clear that within a very few weeks, really, the contra within Nicaragua will cease to exist as a military force. More importantly, I think one could say, is they have lost their opportunity in that the population base from which they once

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hoped to draw recruits, have been denied them. And of course this is largely their own fault. In 1983, 1984, the contra forces embarked on a policy of all-out terror as a means of insuring their control in the areas in which they operate, and this has backfired severely upon them.

HENRY: But Mr. McMichael, all the more reason then to give them \$100 million, right?

MCMICHAEL: No, I don't think so, because you see, this policy of supporting the contras now runs directly contrary to the expressed will of the major Latin American countries organized in Contodoro, and in the support group for Contodoro, who are denouncing the U.S. support for the contras.

And of course, the contras are simply an expression of what has now become, all I can define it as is a presidential obsession with overthrowing the Nicaraguan government, which has nothing in the view of most sober analysts throughout the world to do with United States national security or real United States interests.

HENRY: Well, the President has said it is a way of keeping our American boys from ever fighting in the region. Send our money down there; send our material down there.

MCMICHAEL: Well, you can send the money and you can send the material, but I will guarantee you that under the circumstances, it's not going to change the situation. The contra...

HENRY: One hundred million dollars won't help them, make them into a fighting force?

MCMICHAEL: No, it will be mostly banked over in Switzerland, where a great deal of this so-called aid money has been going for years.

HENRY: To whom? For whom?

MCMICHAEL: To the leaders of this contra force. They have siphoned off vast sums of this money for their own purposes, and they continue to do so. Even Pastoro himself was a leader in the, of now a very small and ineffective group of anti-Sandinista guerrillas.

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HENRY: If we could get the \$100 million directly to them and it did buy their boots and their guns, would it make a difference?

MCMICHAEL: No, it wouldn't make any difference now at all, because they're militarily gone. It's not a question of material. There's plenty of material in the camps there. They have been defeated in the field. They have no population base on which to draw. They are demoralized.

HENRY: Colonel Lawrence Tracy down at the White House. Sir, are you listening? What do you say?

COLONEL TRACY: Well, I'm not surprised at all. I've heard David say this particular line a number of times in the past. I think he is completely wrong, and the only thing that I would say that he is correct about is that certainly the military tide has turned against the resistance movement. To say that they are defeated is preposterous.

He also said that they blew their chance because in 1983 and 1984, they engaged in a reign of terror and that turned the population against them. The facts are that the size of the force grew at that point to double the size that it was before. They were only a few hundred back in 1981, at the time that the Sandinista army was 40,000 strong. It's another particular shading of the truth that we hear a lot, that the Sandinistas had built their large military in a reaction to the threat that they perceived from the contras. But their own ambassador here in Washington admits just the opposite.

So, the idea that they cannot win, that again is both politically and militarily incorrect. They are at this point going with M-16 or AK-47s, as they have, rifles, light machine guns. They don't even have 50-caliber machine guns, and they're going against some extremely devastating firepower, brought on by, especially by the gunships, the MI-8s and the MI-24s. The 24 is the one that the Soviets are using with such devastating effect in Afghanistan.

They have not controlled territory, and that has been a very militarily prudent decision, to not try to control territory, because that would allow them to be susceptible to the firepower. So, they move around. They have a great degree of political support from the people in that area, in the areas where they've been fighting.

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But they are just being at this point completely outgunned, because the Sandinistas have virtually unlimited supplies of weapons from the Soviet Union, from the bloc; trainers; Cubans; Cuban pilots flying the gunships against Nicaraguans. And of course we are providing nothing in the way of military assistance to these people.

And I would say that certainly what the President has said could be right, and I think it's important to understand what has taken place in this city of Washington over the last two or three years. There has been a growing consensus that the Sandinistas are indeed Marxist-Leninists. They are indeed attempting to overthrow neighboring governments, particularly El Salvador. There are statements on both sides of the aisle in Congress, from some of the most liberal members of the Senate and the Congress, saying that the Sandinistas cannot be permitted to do this, and we cannot permit Soviet bases to be developed in the area.

That is the potential threat to Nicaragua. Not Nicaragua per se, but as a staging base for the Soviets.

HENRY: Well Colonel, if I could take you back to the condition of the contras. There is another article in the "Times" this morning that says the general condition of the rebels is worse since its formation in '82; that the mass retreat recently raises questions about their general fighting ability, even if they get the money, the piece says. It goes on to call it a paralyzed army. What do you think \$100 million is going to do for them?

COLONEL TRACY: Well, depending on how the \$100 million would be broken up. The majority of it would have to go for military assistance. We would like to see them have a capability of bringing down those helicopters, which are just having such a strong impact against them. You can't bring down an MI-24 with a light machine gun or with an M-16. They're very heavily armor-plated on the bottom. The reason that the (UNCLEAR) in Afghanistan have had success, they've been able to lure the Soviets into valleys, and then fire down on them. The terrain conditions in Nicaragua do not permit that. So, you need an ability to withstand that.

Also, anti-tank capability, because the Sandinistas have, where conditions in the terrain have permitted, used some of their heavy tanks, although they're basically used to subdue the population. And also, their armored personnel carriers.

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HENRY: Wait just a minute. I'm getting some real disagreement here in the studio from David McMichael.

(LAUGHTER)

COLONEL TRACY: I'm not a bit surprised. I haven't had a chance to say hello to you, David. How are you?

MCMICHAEL: I'm fine, Larry, and I'm really glad to be talking with you again. It's better, I think, than our correspondence exchange.

COLONEL TRACY: Occasionally, that's right.

MCMICHAEL: This view on the tanks; as a matter of fact, in many of the discussions I had this time with Nicaraguan military people, I really got the keen impression that they regarded the tanks, acquisition of the tanks, as not the smartest thing they ever did.

But to talk about them being used to subdue the populace is absolutely absurd. There's never been an occasion when the tanks or anything else have been used to subdue the populace there. There's been very, very limited use of the tanks in the counterinsurgency role.

And you're right. The Nicaraguans have armed themselves very, very effectively and heavily against the contra, and I don't regard any government fighting a war, one financed by an outside power, mounted from outside the country, regardless of who fills the ranks, I certainly don't regard this as something of a cricket match, in which each side is required to use absolutely the same weapons in the interest of fairness. The intent is to win the war. I think that they're using the weapons that they can.

HENRY: But how serious a threat has Colonel Tracy spelled out for us, Mr. McMichael? He said it's a Marxist-Leninist government. He said their purpose is to overthrow the other governments in the region; Soviet backed.

You're a former C.I.A. analyst.

MCMICHAEL: I think what I can tell you is that the first part of Colonel Tracy's statement is correct. Many of the people who run the government there are Marxist-Leninists.

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HENRY: Then how much of a threat are they?

MCMICHAEL: Well, the second parts of this are absurd. There is not intention on their part to overthrow other governments. They have, as a matter of fact, the only country that has endorsed the full Contorodoro treaty, which prohibits these actions, one which is now, as I point out, backed by all the Latin American countries, even some of the United States Central American clients.

HENRY: Well, suppose they don't want to overthrow the other governments. Suppose they just want to sit there and be a Marxist government that is supplied by the Soviet Union right there in the middle of Latin America. Can we live with that?

MCMICHAEL: I think we can certainly live with it. If you look at what the government has been in Nicaragua over the past six and a half years, sure, there are aspects of it which certainly I don't endorse, just as there aspects in practically any government in the world that I don't endorse.

But here is a country that is pledged to non-alignment; to the maintenance of a mixed economy; to a political pluralism; which has held elections which legitimized the current government, which by the vast majority of competent international observers, including the prestigious U.S. political science group, the Latin American Study Association, were open, fair and did represent effectively the will of the people.

(OVERTALK)

MCMICHAEL: What is the problem? That's what I wonder. Have they ever seized a United States business, for which compensation has (UNCLEAR), which is only the case of a couple of old semi-abandoned gold mines. Other businesses operate down there. They've never killed or injured an American citizen in the country. The only American citizens I know who have been, or foreigners of any sort, who have been killed, injured, kidnapped and so forth, have been done so by the contras.

HENRY: Excuse me, sir. Let me break in, because I need to put some commercials into this program.

Colonel Tracy, when we get back, can we go directly to you, sir, and say, what is the big...

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COLONEL TRACY: Yes, when we do come back, I'd like to comment on a number of points that David made, which are completely fallacious.

HENRY: Alright, but most of all I'd like for you to tell us what is the big problem. Obviously Congress has not yet been convinced that there's such a danger with a Soviet Marxist government down there.

COLONEL TRACY: There is a strong agreement within the Congress. The disagreement is over the means, and how to adapt the policy to this. Believe me, there are very few, if any, members of Congress that would agree with what you've just heard from David.

HENRY: Alright. When we come back, explain that to us, Colonel Tracy.

I'm Sherrye Henry. This is WOR, "The Talk of New York."

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HENRY: And I'm Sherrye Henry on WOR. It is "The Talk of New York". And you're at 710 on your AM dial. It is now 10:25, this Thursday morning, with David McMichael in the studio. He is from the Council on Hemispheric Affairs, disagreeing mightly with Colonel Lawrence Tracy, who is talking to us from the White House. He's a member of the State Department's Latin American Public Diplomacy Department.

Colonel Tracy, tell us what is the big problem. Let's say Nicaragua isn't trying to overthrow all of those other countries, even though I know you believe that firmly.

COLONEL TRACY: So does the U.S. Congress, I might point out, Sherrye. Very firmly.

HENRY: Alright. What is the great problem with having that government down there? Make us understand as you would make the Congress understand.

COLONEL TRACY: Well, let me go back, and in answering your question, let me at the same time address some of the points that David brought out, which I think, as I said, are completely fallacious.

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He has rationalized the military build-up of the Sandinistas (UNCLEAR). Of course, they've had to arm themselves to the teeth, because any country has the right to defend, and they're faced with this force. But in 1980, about seventeen or eighteen months before, after they had come into power, they had already achieved the largest army in Central America. They had an army larger than Guatamela, and Guatamela has a population three times as great.

By the end of 1981, that army had grown to 40,000. Ambassador Tunerman in Washington, the Nicaraguan ambassador, wrote a letter to the "Washington Post" several months ago in which he tried to blame the U.S. for all of Nicaragua's woes, as David seems to be doing as well. And Ambassador Tunerman said in November 1981...

MCMICHAEL: Please don't put words in my mouth.

COLONEL TRACY: Well, I'm saying...did you not say that, David?

MCMICHAEL: No. I did not say that Nicaragua woes are all to be blamed on the United States.

COLONEL TRACY: You are saying that they have developed their large military because of the threat they face from the contras.

MCMICHAEL: I did not say that. I said that in combating the contras, they had very sensibly used every weapon that they were able to get that would be effective against them.

COLONEL TRACY: They brought those weapons in before they were facing the contras.

MCMICHAEL: They did not have any helicopters at all until 1984, and you know that happens to be a fact. They did not bring in the...

(OVERTALK)

MCMICHAEL: They did not bring in the MIG-24s and -25s until 1984, and you know that that is a fact.

COLONEL TRACY: But they did, and you're obscuring the fact that they had the largest army. They had 40,000 men under arms

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(OVERTALK)

MCMICHAEL: In other words, what you're saying is that they should have only armed after the fact, and not before the fact.

COLONEL TRACY: Why did they have to have 40,000 people when their own ambassador said they were faced only with a couple of hundred ex-National Guardsmen? And that is their official position.

MCMICHAEL: It certainly is their official position.

HENRY: Well, could you tell us, Colonel Tracy, why did they?

COLONEL TRACY: Because it seems to be a characteristic of Marxist-Leninist governments. I would recommend that you and your...

HENRY: To do what, sir?

COLONEL TRACY: To create a large, standing military.

HENRY: Why?

COLONEL TRACY: That is a question I guess you would have to look into the study of Marxism. Perhaps it's that social control and organization.

HENRY: Well, it's very expensive to maintain a large army like that.

COLONEL TRACY: Pardon me?

HENRY: It's very expensive to maintain a large army like that. You must have your ideas why they wanted it.

COLONEL TRACY: Well basically, I would say that they did it to certainly intimidate their own population; to create that particular psychological threat to their neighbors. They had indeed since, at least since 1980, been providing arms to the guerillas in El Salvador, which the U.S. Congress has said repeatedly is to overthrow the government of El Salvador. This was said in 1984 by Congress.

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In 1982, at the particular time that David was with the C.I.A. and denies they were doing this at the time, Congressman Edward Boland of Massachusetts, one of the most vocal critics of the policy, said indeed that the Sandinistas are attempting to overthrow, and he said that there is persuasive evidence, in fact, that the Sandinista government is helping to train insurgents and is transferring arms to the insurgents in El Salvador.

MCMICHAEL: Sir, evidence that was so persuasive we took it to the World Court to demonstrate to the world...

COLONEL TRACY: Are you saying that Congressman Boland is a dupe?

MCMICHAEL: I am saying that I think I know what lay behind the document which Congressman Boland made that statement, which was a document, by the way, which said that the funding for the contras should be terminated right then because if the arms were flowing in that way, and he stipulated that as a legal principle; he said, okay, the arms are flowing, flowing at this high rate, and therefore the contra force, which ostensibly has been designed simply to block that flow of arms, is not useful for the purposes, and that money should be terminated, and the contra force should be terminated.

And as you very well know, Colonel, the business of blocking arms flow was simply a cover story used to persuade the Congress to vote money for that contra force, whose purpose, from the beginning, as I think you will have to admit, has been to overthrow a government which, in its judgment, the Administration regarded as a threat or whatever, and decided it was going to overthrow.

(OVERTALK)

HENRY: I need to break in because I think the two of you, who know a great deal more about this than the rest of us, can sidetrack onto... the business of arms flowing to the El Salvador has been argued endlessly, whether or not they were going, weren't going. It has never been fully decided one way or another. Could I keep you in the line of whether or not...this is my question to you, and I'll turn it back to you again, Colonel Tracy.

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Here the President is really concerned about the situation in Nicaragua. I haven't heard him use terms the way he has in the last week. He said if we don't want "to see the map of Central American covered in a seas of blood, lapping at our own border"; now, that is pretty graphic; "a sea of blood lapping at our own border, we must act now."

And I want to ask you, Colonel Tracy, if the threat is that grave, where a sea of blood is lapping at our own border, why are we just putting \$100 million down there? Why don't we really do something about it?

COLONEL TRACY: Well, it depends on what you mean by really doing something. One of the things that we would like to do is provide the arms to Nicaraguans who are attempting to have a government live up to the promises that David maintains they have kept; I would say that they have blatantly violated; we would like to have them to have the capability of doing that, as well as to Salvadorans and Hondurans and others in Central America to defend themselves, rather than going down and sending U.S. troops later.

This is the consensus that I spoke about before that has emerged in the Congress, that the Sandinistas are expansionists, that they are aggressors, and that we cannot permit Soviet bases.

That particular consensus is good in one sense, but at the same time there is a danger to it, and that is, when and if the Congress decides that they have been deceived, and their good intentions have been rejected by the Sandinistas, and that may come in six months, and maybe in a year, there probably will not be a resistance movement in Nicaragua that will be able to do that. Then they'll have to take that particular step, and that could be U.S. troops, and I think that would be a tragedy.

HENRY: You haven't answered my question. I'm saying if the threat is that grave, then, here is a fighting force that everybody agrees right now is paralyzed...

COLONEL TRACY: That again, I will not accept that premise, that everybody agrees. I say the Jim LeMoyne article in the paper. He is a fine journalist, but on the idea that they are paralyzed, when they have no heavy weapons coming to their side in any way, and they are faced with this, you can see why they would go.

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I think if weapons came into that group, you would see that paralysis that he is talking about end very quickly. And the morale is high.

HENRY: Well, it may end the paralysis. Let's give you that. Let's say it ends the paralysis, if the money comes in. It certainly is not going to be enough money for this fighting force to overthrow the government.

COLONEL TRACY: Their attempt, despite what David said, to overthrow the government, is not what they are attempting to do. What they are attempting to do is to place pressure on that government so that they will sit down as the armed and unarmed resistance recommended in March of 1985; they would go in for a ceasefire; Ortega and the Sandinistas to remain in power; they sit down at the bargaining table, and they work out a way to go back to the ideals of 1979. That is what their objective is, and it has not changed since 1985.

HENRY: Is that really the objective, Mr. McMichael, or does the President want to overthrow the government of Nicaragua?

MCMICHAEL: The President wants to overthrow the government of Nicaragua. Mr. Reagan has...his every statement on this, as you point out, "seas of blood lapping our shores", this extreme rhetoric, this total disregard for truth, which characterizes the Reagan Administration at every level in the conduct of its foreign policy.

Let me read to you very quickly a statement from a high-level, private Canadian mission, which included former defense officials, former parliamentarians representing all branches of Canadian life. Their report is now being considered by the Canadian government.

This is what they stated in December of 1985 on United States policy. It says "The mission came to the sober conclusion that current U.S. foreign policy is the chief obstacle to peace in the region, and its present direction accentuates the risk of regional war. The United States acts in glaring isolation, without the support of Latin America, Europe or Canada.

"The stated goals of U.S. foreign policy toward Central America are to protect its own legitimate security interests; uphold the rule of law, as well to promote demilitarization,

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democracy and equitable socio-economic development and peace, but U.S. policies are bringing about results which de facto contradict these goals."

And I think that is the international position generally.

HENRY: Let me break for some commercials again. When we get back, let's talk about some opposition right here at home, not necessarily out of our borders, like the Canadians, but opposition right here at home.

There's a Democratic counter-proposal that has been made, another way to solve the problem in Nicaragua. Let's talk about that and find out what the Administration thinks of it, after this on WOR Radio 710.

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HENRY: And I hope you're getting some information you can use this morning to make up your mind how you feel about whether or not we should vote \$100 million more for Nicaragua's rebels.

David McMichael here is saying no. He's from the Council on Hemispheric Affairs. Colonel Tracy down in Washington from the State Department is saying yes.

Now, back to you, Colonel Tracy. The President was asked by a reporter just a day or two ago whether or not the Democrats are unwittingly aiding the Marxists, and he said, indeed, he thought they were.

Now, here the Democrats coming along with their proposal; by the way, David McMichael, I'm sure he'd say that you, too, are aiding the Marxists. Do you ever think about that, that you might be a dupe of the Soviet-led Marxist government in Nicaragua?

MCMICHAEL: Well, I'll tell you something. I do think about this. I try to examine my involvement in this as I have done for quite some time, ever since I became involved in this thing, and my conclusions keep coming back to where they are.

No, I do not believe that I am a dupe of anyone. I do not believe that Nicaragua poses any threat to the security of the United States. I do believe, and I believe very strongly, and this is why I'm involved in this, is that this Administration, from the very moment it came into office, has persistently and

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publicly misled the American people about what its intentions were, what its actions are, and what is the character of the situation.

HENRY: Well, then you have to think of an answer to the question "why" later, and let me give that to you later. Why would the Reagan-led Administration do that?

But back to you, Colonel Tracy. Is the Democratic counter-proposal and the Democratic leadership that's standing behind it, all dupes, unwittingly, of the Marxist government? They want to renew an attempt for a negotiated settlement; they want a six-month moratorium on military affairs; they want bilateral talks between Nicaragua and the United States; and at the same time, they want a meeting with the Contadora group in Washington. What do you think of those proposals?

COLONEL TRACY: Well, let me start it, and looking at it this. As far as are there dupes in the Congress, no; and I think that's where David and I will disagree. He seems to think that the statements of the Congress, which have gone from 1982 up through the current, on what the Nicaraguans are doing, are flying completely in the face of what he said.

The Congressional consensus is that Nicaragua has attempted to overthrow the government of El Salvador. Congress realizes that on both sides of the aisle. Senator Dodd the other evening on "Nightline" brought it out, that he held no grief whatsoever for the Marxist-Leninists. He said let's let it go six months or so, and then maybe there is still the military option.

The problem with waiting six months and getting no arms at all to the resistance movement in this period is, as I said before, there will probably be no resistance movement. It frightens me as one who spent three years in Vietnam what this military option is that the Democratic members of the Congress may feel has to be used; and if that happens, then I think we do have a very serious problem.

And in that sense, there is an attempt, there is an unwitting, and I would emphasize that, unwitting and unwilling, decision on part of many of the Democratic members who are letting their idealism and their hope for peace perhaps get the better of some of their judgment; that in that six-month period, the Sandinistas could do a long way in consolidating this very, very dictatorial regime that they they have created.

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HENRY: Well, Colonel Tracy, are you telling me then that if we don't aid the rebels, rebels will fade away; that there aren't any other groups in the world that care about their plight; there aren't any other governments around there who are afraid of what will happen if the Nicaraguan government really becomes as strong as you think it will? Only we stand between those rebels being able to fight and not being able to fight?

COLONEL TRACY: You're talking about countries, Sherrye, that are very poor; that have their own internal problems. El Salvador has its own internal insurgency, which is of course supported by Nicaragua. People are looking towards the United States for a particular role, and if the United States does not live up to that commitment, there is going to be that tendency to perhaps say, well, we've got to do something to cut a deal. We don't have a good reputation throughout the world as far as standing by our allies, and I think this will be the most recent manifestation of it, if we fail to come to the assistance of the Sandinistas now.

There was a recent Gallup Poll taken. It was commissioned by the USIA, but it was using the complete integrity of the Gallup mechanism in their poll, and it showed the overwhelming majority of the people surveyed, and this was both rural and urban, in all the countries of Central America, supported both our assistance to the government of El Salvador and military assistance, as well as support for the anti-Sandinistas, the rebel force.

It went into the high 80s as far as the people's perception that Nicaragua was a distinct military threat to their countries. That's where the threat comes. Nicaragua is no threat to the United States at all. Neither is Cuba, for that matter...

HENRY: Wait a minute, not according to the President. Red blood lapping at our own borders.

COLONEL TRACY: It is the systemic relationship of Nicaragua, Cuba and the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc, and being able to in some way create a paralysis on the ability of the United States to respond to Soviet challenges in other parts of the world. We are so thoroughly dependent on the maritime routes of the Caribbean, the raw materials that are in there, that if we face a potential, a real threat in that area, we will not be able, with confidence, to be able to project our forces to other parts of the area.

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I think the Soviets are doing this in an extremely rational way. I have no criticism of the Soviets and what they are doing. They're playing this like a chess player, and they're gaining a great degree of support by exploiting the good will of the American people.

HENRY: Colonel, if one sealane were closed down there to American shipping, it wouldn't be a problem between us and the Nicaraguan government. It would be a problem between us and the Soviet Union, and we would stand at the brink of war.

COLONEL TRACY: Do we want to have that?

HENRY: No, of course we don't. Are you telling me, sir, you really think that would happen, that the government down there of Nicaragua; let's say the rebels were totally defeated; would close sealanes?

COLONEL TRACY: No. We're talking about the Soviet Union and Cuba. Put it into a global fashion, because it must be looked at globally.

The main obstacle to the Soviet Union in the world is the United States. We'll be sending 60% of the resupplies to NATO, to our troops in NATO and those of our allies, through those sealanes. Right now, because of the build-up of the Cuban military, and we must look at this again systemically and regionally, our navy must commit a large share of its assets right now to what would happen if we did go to war with the Soviet Union in Europe, how we would handle Cuba.

We're spread a little too thin to be able to even have it down there. We'd much rather be able to have Cuba not even be a factor and be able to concentrate our forces in the North Atlantic.

If we see the Soviets do another Cuba on the mainland of Central America, with a port on the Pacific to help the Soviet navy in that area; with one on the Caribbean to augment what they have in Cuba, you do have an encroachment in our area on the part of the Soviet Union, which weakens us vis a vis the Soviet Union on a strategic basis. That is the tie-in.

HENRY: Colonel Tracy, please stay there. I'm going to break for some commercials again, and come right back. I'd like to talk to the two of you and ask you, what do you think Congress is going to do next week?

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I'm Sherrye Henry on WOR, "The Talk of New York."

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HENRY: And in our last minutes in this hour with David McMichael and Colonel Lawrence Tracy as my guests, let me ask you, what do you think the Congress is going to do?

Let me tell the listeners first that there is a whole lot of lobbying going on on both sides. You've seen Secretary of State Schultz get red-faced, pound the table, as he testified. Weinberger has done almost the same thing. The President is talking in real graphic terms about the danger. There's a private group, a private group called the National Endowment for the Preservation of Liberty, which has committed over a million dollars to commercials. I'd like to play one for you. This is to give you an example of what kind of information is being put out by the National Endowment for the Preservation of Liberty. Listen to this.

MAN: This is Nicaragua's leading export: people. One of every six Nicaraguans has already become a refugee. They escape from what we now know is the pattern of every Communist takeover in the world.

In Nicaragua today, the religious are persecuted; opponents executed; dissenters imprisoned; and a population of hundreds of thousands cannot go home again.

Here is terrorism we can do something about, if we support the President on Nicaragua.

HENRY: And of course, that voice sounds very much like the President of the United States, doesn't it?

So, here's a big push being made toward the House vote next week. Let me start out with you. What do you think is going to happen, Colonel Tracy, down in Washington?

COLONEL: Well, there's no question. It's going to be a very, very close vote. Whether or not it is going to go the way we want it or not, I would not predict on it.

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But I would say this: If we don't provide this now, we're going to spend a lot more in the future, and I don't want to be alarmist, but I'm afraid if we don't send dollars and weapons down now, as the President has said, there could be U.S. troops down there later, and I think that would be a tragedy, and it will be sufficient responsibility to go all around if that ever happens, because we did not make the commitment of will and resources at present, and to make sacrifice that in the future.

HENRY: And you, David McMichael.

MCMICHAEL: I tend to agree it will be a close vote. From my talks on the Hill yesterday, I rather gather that the present package will be defeated. It's got to go up on a no-amendment up or down vote. Apparently the vote's going to be on the 19th. I rather guess it will be defeated, but as has happened in the past, some form of compromise will be cobbled together to keep this thing limping along, and to prevent the full acceptance of what would give the guarantees, prevent these nightmares that Colonel Tracy has presented to us as if a world war erupting with the Soviet Union is going to be fought on World War II style, with convoys of ships going across the Atlantic...

COLONEL TRACY: Again David, don't put words in my mouth.

MCMICHAEL: Just a moment, just a moment.

COLONEL TRACY: Alright. I'm telling you the same thing you said to me before.

MCMICHAEL: Thank you, sir, but you did speak of a war with the Soviet Union and U.S. shipping going to NATO as if it's presumed a Second World War type of scenario, which I think very few people would buy into, and that Cuba would be willing to commit suicide by attacking shipping going through these straits. I do not think that is a realistic scenario. I think it is a nightmare, progandistic type of scenario, if you'll excuse my saying so.

I do believe, in response to Sherrye's question, that there will be, keeping this thing limping along, with some form of aid, and yet the very things you talk about, the bases, the fear of bases, the fear of foreign troops there, all are covered in Contordoro and in the guarantess offered to the United States at the Manzilla talks, and why we have not accepted those, I leave to our listeners to imagine.

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HENRY: We're coming back everybody.

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HENRY: And thank you for listening everybody. I'll be back tomorrow, right after the ten o'clock news. Sherrye Henry on WOR New York. Won't you too, I hope.

(END)